

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 224481

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, TH, VS

SUBJECT: DRUGGING OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT UTAPAO

REF: BANGKOK 19610 AND PREVIOUS

1. ON SEPTEMBER 18 CONGRESSMAN EILBERG WAS SHOWN COPIES OF THE TELEGRAMS EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE UTAPAO DRUGGING INCIDENT BEGINNING WITH STATE 193180 OF AUGUST 14 AND ENDING WITH THE REFTEL. IN RETURN, MR. EILBERG PROVIDED A COPY OF WHAT IS EVIDENTLY AN AIR FORCE DOCUMENT ENTITLED "INTERIM RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS OF SEDATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT U-TAPAO AIR BASE, THAILAND, ON 1 MAY 1975".

2. ITEMS 7 AND 10 OF THIS DOCUMENT READ AS FOLLOWS:

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7. WHO WERE THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES PRESENT

WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE TO ADMINISTER THE SEDATIVE DRUGS TO THE COMPLAINING REFUGEES?

THOSE PRESENT DURING THE DISCUSSION ON USE OF SEDATIVES INCLUDED COLONEL HAROLD R. AUSTIN, USAF, BASE COMMANDER; LT COLONEL GEORGE C. REICHEL, HOSPITAL COMMANDER; MR. MICHAEL CARPENTER, MR. THOMAS P. HAMILTON AND MR. LEONARD J. O'CONNER, U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS; MAJOR HENRY C. SCHENKENBERGER, CHIEF OF SECURITY POLICY; LT COLONEL JAMES HURLEY, REFUGEE PROJECT OFFICER (CHIEF OF SERVICES); LT COMMANDER BAMNAN BURANPONG, CHIEF OF THAI NAVY SECURITY FORCES; LT GENE E. DRAKE, STAFF ANESTHETIST, 11TH USAF HOSPITAL, MAJOR JAMES F. ROLLER, NURSE ANESTHETIST, 11TH USAF HOSPITAL, AND NAVY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER LARRY L. DUNN, WHO FIRST SUGGESTED THE USE OF SEDATIVES OR TRANQUILIZERS. A THAI IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL WAS PRESENT, BUT HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED. FINAL APPROVAL FOR USE OF SEDATIVES WAS MADE BY THE BASE COMMANDER WHO WAS THE SENIOR U.S. AIR FORCE OFFICER PRESENT AT THE SCENE.

10. WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN THE DETERMINATION TO SEDATE THE 13 REFUGEES?

MR. MICHAEL CARPENTER, MR. THOMAS P. HAMILTON AND MR. LEONARD J. O'CONNER, U.S. EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES FROM BA4GKOK, THAILAND WERE AT U-TAPAO DURING REFUGEE EVACUATION. WHEN THE PROBLEM CONCERNING THE 13 REFUGEES AROSE, THEY PLACED SEVERAL CALLS TO THE EMBASSY IN BANGKOK. THEY WERE ADVISED THAT THE THAIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE REFUGEES TO LEAVE AND THAT EMBASSY PERSONNEL SHOULD STAY OUT OF IT. MR. HAMILTON ADVISED THAT THERE WAS NO ONE OUTSIDE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY WHO COULD OR WOULD MAKE ANY DECISION BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS. HE FURTHER STATED THAT IN DISPOSING OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM THE MILITARY MUST CONSIDER THAT THERE IS NO STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT OR OTHER WRITTEN AGREEMENTS WITH

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THAILAND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OR CONTINUANCE OF U.S. BASES IN THAILAND AND ALL SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS WERE THOROUGHLY INDOCTRINATED WITH THE CONCEPT THAT THEY MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HONOR ANY THAI OFFICIAL REQUESTS. UNQUOTE.

3. WE ARE ALSO PASSING COPIES OF THE TELEGRAMS AND THE AIR FORCE DOCUMENT TO DOD/ISA. CONGRESSMAN EILBERG

THANKED THE DEPARTMENT FOR ITS HELP IN TRYING TO CLEAR
UP THE FACTS SURROUNDING THIS INCIDENT BUT DID NOT IN-
DICATE WHAT STEPS IF ANY HE WAS PLANNING TO TAKE.

4. WE ARE SUGGESTING TO DOD/ISA THAT THEY PASS THE
TELEGRAMS ON TO THE AIR FORCE SO THAT THEIR INVESTI-
GATION MIGHT BE CONTINUED IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH
THE FACTS AND RESOLVE THE PRESENT INCONSISTENCIES.
YOU SHOULD GIVE THIS INVESTIGATION YOUR FULLEST
ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION. KISSINGER

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